

(c) whether any deaths have occurred due to goitre, if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there is proposal for introducing iodisation process of all kinds of common (consumable) salts, if so, the main features of this programme; and

(e) the steps being taken to eradicate goitre throughout the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b) It is estimated that more than 200 million people are at the risk of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) in the country. Surveys conducted in 275 districts of 29 States and Union Territories have shown that the prevalence of Goitre and other Iodine Deficiency Disorders is more than 10% in 235 districts.

(c) No such death has been reported.

(d) and (e) National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme envisages universal iodisation of edible salt in the country. The Programme strategy includes IDD surveys, supply of iodised salt, monitoring of iodine content of salt and health education to increase public awareness. Sale of non-iodised salt has also been banned completely in all States/UTs except in Kerala, Goa and Pondicherry and partially in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

[English]

Passport Offices

170. SHRI A.G.S. RAM BABU : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Passport Offices in Tamil Nadu;

(b) the average number of applications processed every month;

(c) whether there is any delay in the issue of passport;

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal to open passport office in Madurai;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) There are two Passport Offices in Chennai & Tiruchirappalli.

(b) The average number of applications processed every month from each Passport Office is as follows :

Tiruchirappalli	15,980
Chennai	11,180

(c) R.P.O., Chennai & P.O., Tiruchirappalli, take approximately 6-8 weeks to issue a passport.

(d) to (f) There is no proposal presently under consideration of the Government to open any more Passport Offices as the existing offices are able to cater to the needs of the passport applicants from the state and issue a passport within a reasonable period of time.

Family Welfare Projects in Rajasthan

171. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of Family Welfare Projects under implementation in Rajasthan;

(b) the efforts made by the Government for effective implementation of these projects; and

(c) the achievement made during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b) Two Family Welfare area projects are under implementation in the State of Rajasthan, one with the assistance of United Nations Population Fund in 13 districts from 1st March, 1989 to 31st March, 1997 at a total cost of Rs. 34.85 Cr. and the second Ninth India Population Project at a total cost of Rs. 108.57 Cr. with World Bank assistance in 10 backward districts for a period of 7 years w.e.f. 16th June, 1994. The main objectives of the projects are to reduce maternal and child mortality, morbidity and birth rates. The projects are implemented by the State Government and progress in implementation is reviewed by the Government of India from time to time.

(c) Under the UNFPA project 418 sub-centres, 19 primary health centres, 28 LHV quarters, 10 ANM training schools, 3 LHV training schools and 1 building for state health education extension information communication have been constructed. So far, 7,000 dai's and 5,092 multipurpose health workers (male and female) have been trained.

Under the IPP-IX project 146 sub-centres have been constructed, 40 operation theatres and delivery rooms at first referral units have also been provided. So far, 2156 health functionaries have been trained under the project.

Issuance of Visa

172. SHRI A. SAMPATH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that certain countries are not issuing work permits and visas to Indian citizens on grounds of religion;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) No specific instances of refusal of work permits and visas to Indian citizens by countries on grounds of religion have come to the notice of Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Mounting AIDS in New Borns in India

173. DR. PRABIN CHANDRA SARMA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Mounting AIDS in new Borns in India" appearing in 'Assam Tribune' dated September 24, 1996;

(b) whether 80,000 babies born every year in India are likely to be infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) passed on by their mothers; and

(c) if so, the corrective measures being adopted by the Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The estimate is based on a single hospital study. It is difficult to extrapolate based on the report of a single study. In order to prevent and control the spread of HIV/AIDS in India a comprehensive programme is currently under implementation as a centrally sponsored scheme throughout the country. The strategies of the programme consist of generation of awareness amongst high risk behaviour groups and general public about HIV/AIDS, control of sexually transmitted diseases, Blood safety and rational use of blood, care & support.

Inland Water Ways

174. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have a proposal to revamp Inland Water Transport Corporation (CIWTC);

(b) if so, its broad features and the capital outlay involved;

(c) whether the Government also propose to go for a large-scale privatisation of the inland waterways transport sector; and

(d) if so, the rationale behind this plan and the type of financial incentives to be provided for procurement of modern fleets by the private operators?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b) Recently a leading Consultancy firm has been engaged to prepare a turnaround package for CIWTC for consideration of the Government. The Consultant is expected to submit the report by June, 1997.

(c) and (d) As per the policy of the Government; the Private Sector may be involved in the development of infrastructure facilities. Detailed guidelines for privatisation are being finalised.

HIV Test Facility

175. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the regional STD Centre at Safdarjang Hospital is not having adequate facilities for HIV testing for STD patients;

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken for providing HIV testing facilities, including supply of HIV kits at the Centre, as part of AIDS Control programme;

(c) whether any vehicle for HIV Surveillance Centre was sanctioned and subsequently withdrawn and the withdrawal of the same has made it difficult for the Team to cater to examination, diagnostic and health education needs of those effectively; and

(d) if so, the remedial measures taken to make the Centre fully operational and functional with adequate facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) The Regional STD Centre at Safdarjang Hospital has facilities for HIV testing and it is screening selected STD patients also for HIV infection.

(b) It has been decided not to increase the number of HIV testing surveillance centre over and above existing 62 Surveillance Centres.

(c) and (d) Since the Safdarjang Hospital is not a HIV Surveillance Centre, no vehicle was ever sanctioned and as such the question of withdrawal of the vehicle does not arise.

Ragging in Educational Institutions

176. SHRI CHHITUBHAI GAMIT :
SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are taking any initiative for banning the practice of ragging of students in educational institutions throughout the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA) : (a) and (b) Central Government regards the practice of ragging in educational insitutions as reprehensible and unwholesome. Instructions have been issued, from time to time, to the universities and institutions, and State Governments to take stern action to curb this menace, and to invoke punitive provisions of law where under the garb